JASON AARON • MIKE DEL MUNDO

WEIRDWORLD

SECRET WARS

MARVEL

004

SECRET WARS

THE MULTIVERSE WAS DESTROYED!

NOW, ALL THAT REMAINS...IS **BATTLEWORLD!**

A MASSIVE, PATCHWORK PLANET COMPOSED OF THE FRAGMENTS OF WORLDS THAT NO LONGER EXIST, MAINTAINED BY THE IRON WILL OF ITS GOD AND MASTER, VICTOR VON DOOM!

EACH REGION IS A DOMAIN UNTO ITSELF, AND WEIRDWORLD IS PERHAPS THE STRANGEST OF ALL!

ARKON'S SEARCH ACROSS THE BIZARRE FLOATING ISLAND FOR POLEMACHUS, HIS HOME, HAS MADE HIM SOME POWERFUL ENEMIES--INCLUDING MORGAN LE FEY, BARONESS OF WEIRDWORLD.

DISPLEASED WITH ARKON'S INTERFERENCE IN HER AFFAIRS, LE FEY SENT SKULL THE SLAYER--FORMERLY A SOLDIER NAMED JIM SCULLY--TO ASSASSINATE ARKON. THEIR BATTLE PLUNGED THEM DEEP INTO THE FOREST OF THE MAN-THINGS...

WEIRDWORLD

QUEEN OF THE MAN-THINGS

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I SEE IT.
IN ALL ITS GOLDEN SPLENDOR.
JUST BEFORE MY EYES MELT OUT OF MY FACE.

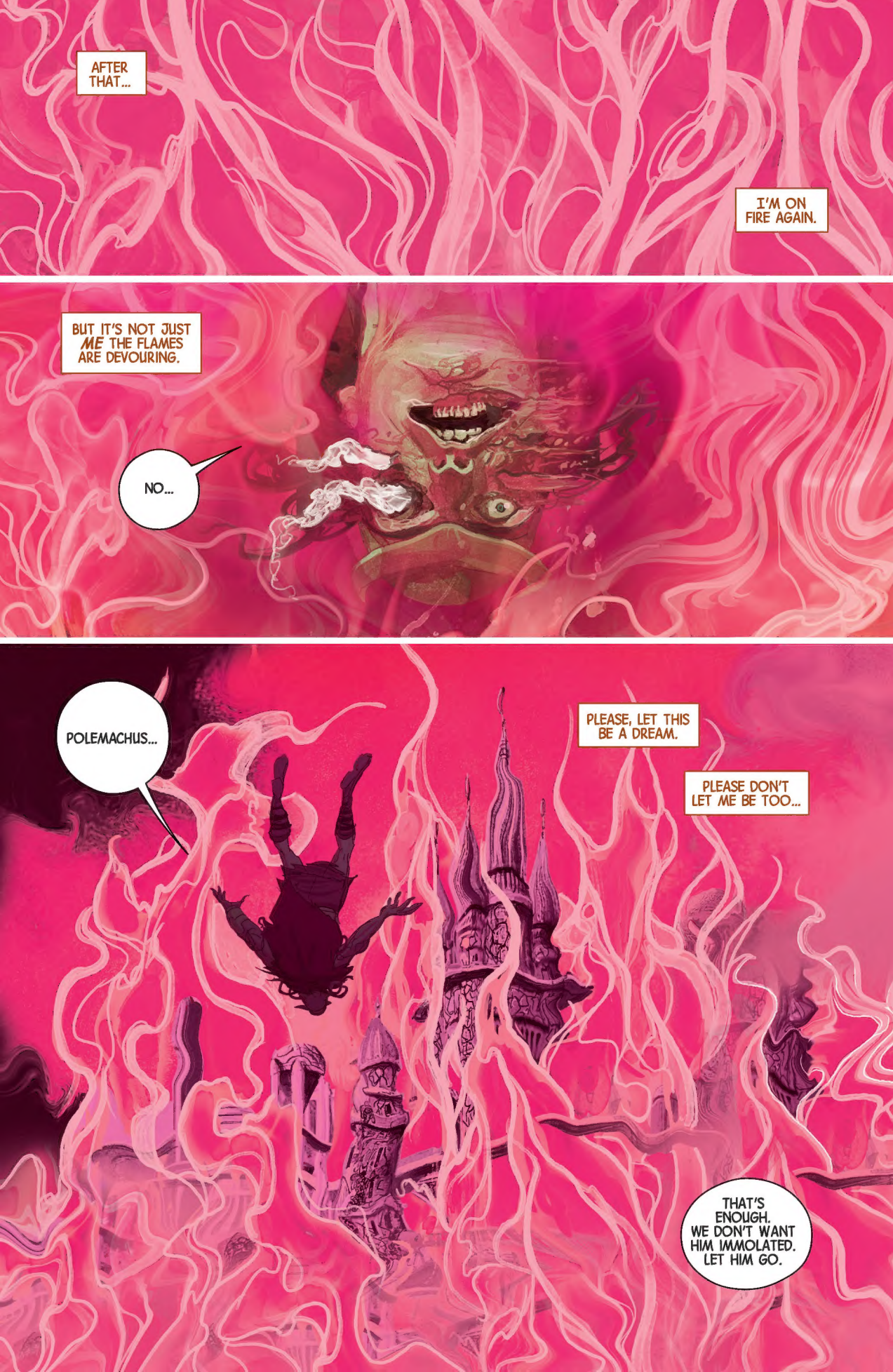
POLEMACHUS.
I AM HOME. HOME AT LAST.
ONLY...
...WHY IS IT UPSIDE DOW--

NRRGH!
RRGGGGHHH!!!
POLEMACHUS DISAPPEARS, AND ALL I SEE IS RED.
GAAGH!
AND ALL I FEEL IS BURNING.
EVERYTHING THAT TOUCHES ME BURNS. EVEN THE TREES.
ESPECIALLY THE TREES.
COULD THIS BE HELL?
NO, I'M NOT NEARLY THAT LUCKY.
IT'S STILL JUST WEIRDWORLD. AND I'M STILL ARKON, LORD OF THE LOST.
AND THIS IS THE MADMAN SENT TO KILL ME.
YOU COULD HAVE HAD A NICE, CLEAN DEATH BY SWORD. BUT YOU HAD TO GO AND BE STUBBORN.
SO NOW WE DO IT THIS WAY.

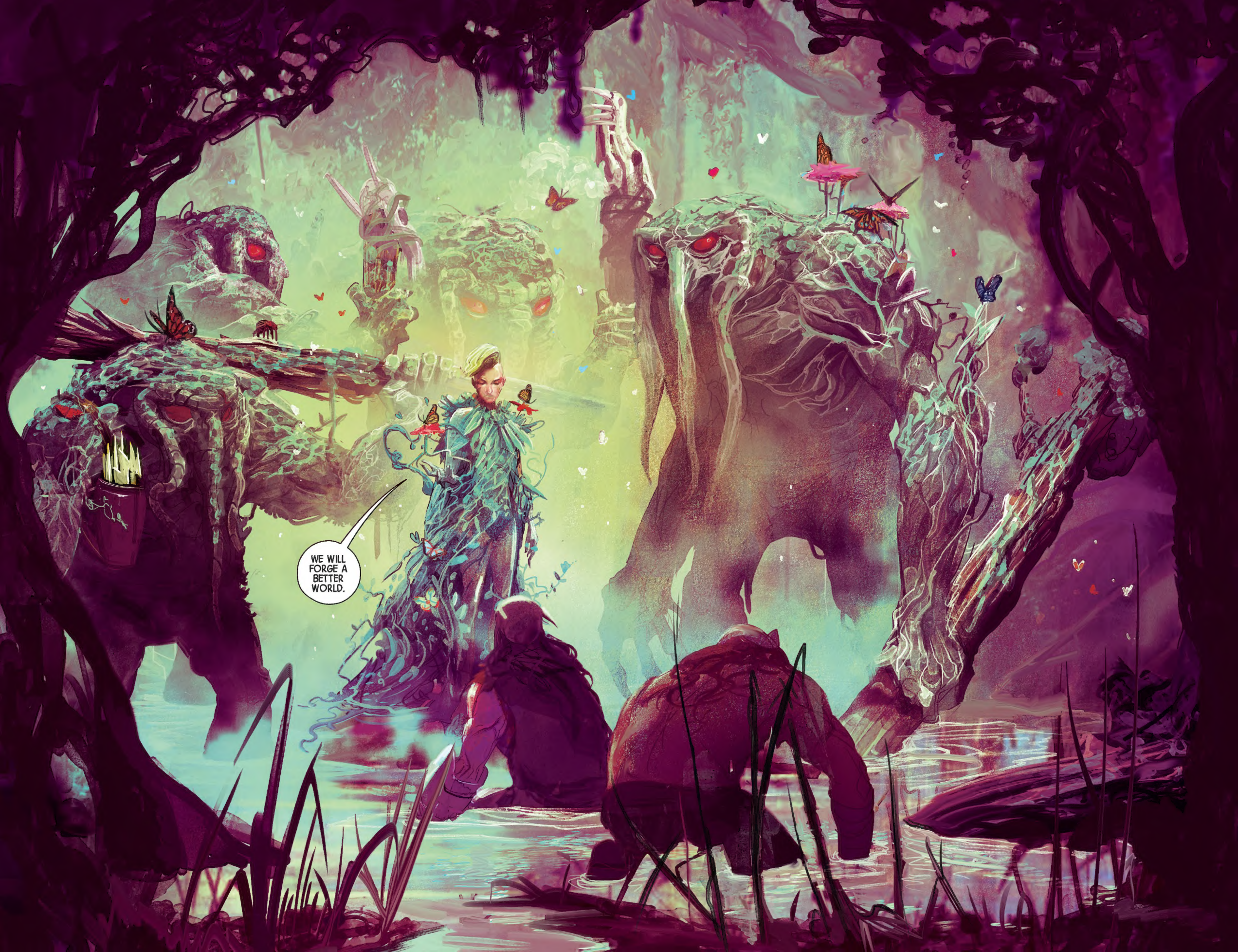
WHILE YOU'RE STILL CAPABLE OF HEARING, I WANT YOU TO KNOW THE NAME OF THE MAN WHO'S GOING TO BE MURDERING YOU.
IT'S SKULL.
SKULL!
SKULL!
SKULL THE SLAYER!
GLUG

BUT...
THAT WASN'T ALWAYS MY NAME. I WAS CALLED...SOMETHING ELSE ONCE. WASN'T I?
WHY DOES THIS WOOD BURN... LIKE...
I...
WHY AM I SUDDENLY SO AFRAID?
HUGGH!
WHILE YOU STILL HAVE A HEAD, KNOW THAT IT IS ARKON OF POLEMACHUS WHO IS ABOUT TO REMOVE IT!
RRRRGHH!!

WHAT KIND OF A BARBARIAN FIGHTS WITH LIGHTNING BOLTS?
I CAN SEE WHY THE WITCH WANTS YOU DEAD. I JUST MET YOU AND I ALREADY WANT TO TEAR YOUR GUTS OUT THROUGH YOUR FACE.
THE KIND WHO'S ABOUT TO KILL YOU!
WHAT WITCH? WHAT ARE YOU--
GUUGH!
GAAAGH!
WHAT IN THE DOOMDAMNED WORLD...
SUDDENLY I'M DIZZY AND BURNING AGAIN, AND I'M NOT SURE WHAT JUST HAPPENED.
THOUGH THE ANSWER OF COURSE PROVES SIMPLE.
WEIRDWORLD HAPPENED.
GOD, I HATE THIS REALM.


AFTER THAT...
I'M ON FIRE AGAIN.
BUT IT'S NOT JUST *ME* THE FLAMES ARE DEVOURING.
NO...
POLEMACHUS...
PLEASE, LET THIS BE A DREAM.
PLEASE DON'T LET ME BE TOO...
THAT'S ENOUGH. WE DON'T WANT HIM IMMOLATED. LET HIM GO.

PLEASE...
SO MUCH *FEAR* IN THIS ONE.
IN THE BOTH OF THEM.
THEY'RE AS MUCH FEAR AS THEY ARE GRISTLE AND BONE.
GOOD.
WHATEVER KNOWS FEAR BURNS AT THE TOUCH OF THE *MAN-THINGS.*
AND FROM THAT HOLY FIRE...


WE WILL FORGE A BETTER WORLD.

I...I SAW...
YES, I KNOW. YOU SAW EVERYTHING YOU LOVE IN FLAMES.
YOU SAW A GLIMPSE OF WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF LE FAY IS NOT DETHRONED.
LE FAY...? WHO...
FOR A MAN WHO SO MANY WANT DEAD, YOU SEEM TO KNOW VERY LITTLE, ARKON OF POLEMACHUS.
MORGAN LE FAY IS THE BARONESS OF THIS REALM. SHE'S THE ONE WHO ORDERED YOUR MURDER.
WHO... WHO ARE...
ME? WHY, I'M THE GOOD WITCH OF WEIRDWORLD. I'M...
SHE'S THE SWAMP QUEEN.
THE LADY OF THE MUCK AND THE MIRE. FANCIES HERSELF THE LEADER OF SOME SORT OF REBELLION.
AND YOU MUST BE THE INFAMOUS SLAYER. I'VE LOST COUNT OF HOW MANY OF MY PEOPLE YOU'VE SENT TO THEIR GRAVES.
DON'T STOP COUNTING JUST YET. THE DAY IS STILL YOUNG.
AAAARRRRGGHH!!
YOUR WORDS CANNOT HIDE YOUR FEAR.
SGT. JAMES PATRICK SCULLY.

YOU FEAR WHAT YOU'VE BECOME. WHAT YOU'VE LOST.
I KNOW THAT FEAR. BECAUSE I WAS SOMEONE ELSE ONCE, TOO.
SOMEONE WHO WALKED THE CONCRETE JUNGLES OF THE WORLD BEYOND THESE BORDERS, JUST AS YOU DID.
MY NAME WAS JENNIFER KALE.
THERE WAS NEVER A PLACE FOR ME IN THE WORLD BEYOND. NO MATTER WHERE I WANDERED, I NEVER FELT LIKE I TRULY BELONGED.
AND THEN ONE DAY, I GOT STUPENDOUSLY LOST AND ENDED UP HERE.
WEIRDWORLD IS WHERE THE LOST THINGS GO. THAT'S WHAT THEY SAY, ISN'T IT? BUT MOST MISS THE TRUE MEANING OF THOSE WORDS.
WE WERE ALL LOST BEFORE WE CAME HERE, OR WE WOULD NEVER HAVE COME.
BUT WEIRDWORLD IS WHERE THE HOPELESSLY LOST CAN FINALLY BECOME FOUND.
IN WEIRDWORLD, JENNIFER KALE HAS AT LAST FOUND HER PURPOSE. HERE, I AM THE QUEEN OF THE MAN-THINGS. HERE I SPEAK FOR THOSE THINGS STILL STUCK IN THE MIRE.
AND I WILL NOT REST UNTIL MORGAN LE FAY HAS ROASTED IN THE FLAMES OF HER FEAR.
LE FAY IS A CURSE UPON THIS LAND. SHE RULES THROUGH MURDER AND DESTRUCTION.
DOESN'T SHE, JIM?
SAYS THE SWAMP WITCH WITH THE ARMY OF KILLER TREES.

OH, I HAVEN'T BROUGHT YOU BOYS HERE TO KILL YOU.
THOUGH YOUR FEAR WOULD MAKE FOR QUITE THE MERRY BONFIRE IF THE MAN-THINGS WERE GIVEN THEIR WAY.
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW HARD IT IS TO UNITE ALL THE MANY DOWNTRODDEN FACTIONS OF A PLACE LIKE WEIRDWORLD?
SAVAGE ELVES. INBRED OGRES. EYEMAZONS. MANPHIBIANS. HAWKSQUATCHES.
MOST DON'T EVEN KNOW THE OTHERS EXIST. FEWER STILL ARE WILLING TO FIGHT FOR THEM.
IF I'M GOING TO DEPOSE LE FAY AND BRING PEACE TO THIS MADCAP MENAGERIE OF A REALM, I'M GOING TO NEED MORE THAN SWAMP MAGIC AND MAN-THINGS.
I NEED WARRIORS.
NO, WHAT ARE YOU...
WARRIORS WHO HAVE FACED THEIR FEARS...
MMRRPH
...AND SURVIVED.

THIS ISN'T REAL.
I TRY TO KEEP TELLING MYSELF THAT.
IT'S JUST A *VISION*. THE SWAMP WITCH'S MAGIC PLAYING WITH MY MIND.
THIS IS MY FEAR MADE REAL. MY FEAR OF LOSING POLEMACHUS, OF MY WORLD BEING TURNED UPSIDE DOWN.
AND YET...
I RECOGNIZE THE VOICES BEHIND EVERY SCREAM. I CAN PUT A NAME TO EVERY DEAD FACE.
I KNOW THESE ROCKS, THESE TREES. EVEN UPSIDE DOWN, I KNOW THIS...
I *KNOW*... THIS PLACE. I...

I KNOW!
I...DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY.
SAY THE WORDS THAT ARE IN YOUR HEART, AND THAT WILL BE YOUR OATH.
I'M AFRAID. ALWAYS AFRAID. OF WHAT I'VE BECOME. OF WHAT I'VE LOST.
LE FAY USED THAT FEAR. USED ME AS HER WEAPON.
I DON'T WANT TO BE THE SLAYER ANYMORE.
THEN BE BAPTIZED IN THE SACRED MIRE AND RISE REBORN...
SKULL THE REDEEMER.
AND WHAT ABOUT YOU, LORD OF THE WARLORDS?
ARE YOU TIRED OF BEING LOST?
ARE YOU READY TO HAVE A HOME AGAIN?
I...

NO!
LEAVE HIM TO ME. I'LL KILL THE BASTARD.
I MEAN... "REDEEM" HIM.
LET HIM GO. ARKON MUST CHOOSE HIS OWN PATH.
FOR SOME LOST SOULS, I FEAR...
"THERE IS NO HOPE OF EVER BEING FOUND."

I KNOW.
I FINALLY REMEMBER.
THAT ROCK! I REMEMBER THAT ROCK!
THIS IS *IT*. POLEMACHUS, MY HOME, IS RIGHT PAST THIS...
ROCK...

I DON'T UNDERSTAND...
IT SHOULD BE... RIGHT HERE.
MY HOME. IT'S...
IT'S GONE.
RRRRRRRR RRRGHH!
NO MORE.
WEIRDWORLD WANTS TO DRIVE ME MAD, BUT I WON'T GIVE IT THE DAMN SATISFACTION.
IF THIS IS WHERE POLEMACHUS DIED, THEN THIS IS WHERE I DIE, TOO.
GOODBYE, WEIRDWORLD.
GOOD DOOMDAMNED RIDDANCE.

GOODNIGHT, POLEMACHUS.
WHEREVER YOU ARE.
TO BE CONCLUDED...

NEXT ISSUE:

THE WAR OF THE WEIRD!